

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Ministry for Gozo to hold Lejlet Lapsi Notte Gozitana**

The streets of Victoria, Gozo, will come alive on Ascension weekend for *Lejlet Lapsi, Notte Gozitana* on Friday, May 22, Saturday, May 23 to Sunday, May 24.

A host of activities with wide appeal, including a balanced mix of different art forms, have been put together into an exciting programme, being organised by the Ministry for Gozo, not just in the capital but around the island.

Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono launched this major event that is expected to attract thousands during a press conference today. Art, music, dance and theatre will be vying for attention, as much as history, local traditions and heritage that are a celebration of Gozo's characteristic cultural identity.

"The Ministry for Gozo is offering an opportunity to Gozitan artists, musicians, dancers, craftsman and other talented individuals to showcase their abilities during an unforgettable weekend," Mrs Debono said.

"This is an opportunity for Gozo's economy to be given a much-needed boost not only due to the internal tourism the weekend will generate but also tourism from overseas as it is also being advertised internationally.

"The promotion overseas will have a long-term effect since tourists are being invited to visit this jewel of an island *per se* not only for this occasion," she said.

The focus of the weekend's events is a celebration of culture of high quality made accessible to all, making use of popular and unusual venues that are not often directly associated with cultural experiences. The initiative of the Lejlet Lapsi, Notte Gozitana continues to build on the good name Victoria has acquired over the years as a centre of culture, history, art and music.

The activities prepared complement the locality's distinct characteristics and unique topography, which provide a natural backdrop in a unique atmosphere.

Popular performers will be flanked by unusual acts, with happenings taking place in both venues associated with culture and other intriguing locations around Victoria, including in the open air. Commercial outlets in Gozo's capital are encouraged to open throughout the weekend, as well as food and beverage outlets that are also expected to provide an added attraction.

Main stages, each with their individual theme, are to be set up in different locations, including at the Citadel, in Independence Square, St George's Square and at the crossroads in Republic Street, with activities being held simultaneously. Re-enactments and street performances will feature prominently in the narrow, winding streets of Victoria, with concerts and recitals taking place in churches and chapels scattered around the town

centre. Private initiatives are being encouraged, and the participation of local artistes is strongly supported.

### **Three event-packed days**

Friday, May 22:

- three major exhibitions in collaboration with Heritage Malta will be inaugurated at the Ministry for Gozo, the Banca Giuratale, and the Citadel Cultural Centre;
- a spectacular Yada show, celebrating the dance company's 25th anniversary, is being held at St Francis Square;
- a Retro & Rock Festival is being held at the bus terminus, with the participation of a U2 Tribute Band;
- a Wine Festival is being held at the Citadel; and
- a candlelight experience will bring Victoria's narrow streets to life.

On Saturday, May 23, in the morning:

- Gozo Mini Musical Show by the Gozo College at St Francis Square;
- thematic tours round Gozo leave either on foot or by minibus from the bus terminus; and
- lunchtime concerts in various chapels.

On Saturday afternoon:

- various parades, re-enactments and folk shows;
- *infiorata*;
- market for children with various hands-on and educational activities.

On Saturday evening and night:

- the stage on Independence Square will host top artists like Mike Spiteri and the Fakawi Band, the Moonlighters from Italy, Mark Spiteri Lucas and various Gozitan singers;
- the stage at the bus terminus will host a Dance Festival with live acts, top DJs and attractions;
- a fashion show is being held at The Duke in Republic Street;
- candlelight experience in Victoria's narrow streets;
- at St Augustine's Square at midnight, a ground fireworks (*giggifogu*) spectacular; and

- on St George's Square after midnight, a chillout will feature Paul Giordimaina and Pamela, Renzo Spiteri, and Rhema featuring William Mangion.

On Sunday morning:

- Gozitan choirs in Victoria's prime churches; and
- *sbandieratori* from Italy and Gozitan dance parade.

On Sunday afternoon:

- various re-enactments and a folk show;
- closing with a pontifical Mass and the *Kwaranturi* procession from the Cathedral.

Various historical places and museums in Victoria and around Gozo will be open for free to the public. Private exhibitions hosted by Gozitan artists will take place around the capital. Local councils around Gozo are opening their prime historical sites and venues for visitors to explore. Several thematic tours will depart on foot or by minibus from the bus terminus on Saturday morning.

In Gozo public transport will function normally, with extended trips to and from Victoria during the later hours. A shuttle service will operate from Mgarr to Victoria. Parking facilities with a park-and-ride service from Victoria and its outskirts to the centre will operate during peak hours of the event.

All necessary precautions are being taken to ensure the smooth running of the event and the safety, security and comfort of the public. Gozo Channel will operate regularly between the islands according to necessity. In Malta public transport will operate regularly; during the later hours, additional transport is being organised from Valletta to Cirkewwa and back.

*Lejlet Lapsi Notte Gozitana* is presented by the Ministry for Gozo and sponsored by the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, Parliamentary Secretariat for Tourism and Air Malta.

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